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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 21 June 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letter dated 19 May 1999 (A/53/967-S/1999/586), addressed to you from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon.

Once again, the representative of Lebanon circulates statements that serve only to obscure and distract Member States from two ongoing facts, which he refuses even to address. First, the volatile situation in southern Lebanon is a direct result of a campaign of terror aimed against neighbouring Israel, which the Government of Lebanon fully supports. Second, Lebanon continues to reject any means, including those put in place by the United Nations, to negotiate a solution to the conflict. For these reasons Lebanon bears direct responsibility for the fact that the conflict continues.

Furthermore, it should be clear that Hizbollah, the Lebanese-endorsed terrorist group that is granted free reign in southern Lebanon, directs its attacks against Israel unconditionally, quite apart from any Israeli activity in the area. As Hizbollah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, said in an interview, "Palestine is occupied territory and the Israeli presence there is an occupation entity and illegal. There is no end to the struggle with such a regime" (Hassan Nasrallah, Joumhouri Islami, Islamic Republic of Iran, 6 March 1999).

In fact, Hizbollah's campaign against Israel is planned to continue beyond a possible Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon: "There are numerous ways in which we can pursue the enemies, even after they withdraw from our occupied land" (Mohammed Ra'ed, head of the "Political Council" of Hizbollah, as quoted by Radio Nur on 24 December 1998). Indeed, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and to this day, Hizbollah has attacked the northern towns and villages of Israel

* A/54/50.

with rockets, deliberately targeting Israeli civilians. Just yesterday, Hizbollah fired 122-millimetre mortar rounds on the Western Galilee, forcing hundreds of Israeli civilians to seek protection in bomb shelters.

In this light, I wish to recall the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 23 October 1970, which provides that sovereignty carries a responsibility not to allow terrorist acts to be organized or prepared in one's territory. The policies of Lebanon stand in direct contradiction to this provision. Not only does the Government of Lebanon refuse to disarm and restrain these groups, in accordance with international law, but Lebanon openly adopts the terrorist group Hizbollah as its own, calling it the "Lebanese National Resistance" (A/53/878-S/1999/333). The Prime Minister of Lebanon has indeed praised Hizbollah's "jihad", as he put it, and its "resistance" (Voice of Lebanon, 16 February 1999).

I wish to remind you that Israel has repeatedly expressed its willingness to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in its entirety. Resolution 425 (1978) not only calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the effective authority of the Lebanese Government in the area. The declared willingness of the Lebanese Government to host an elaborate terrorist infrastructure, to permit its regular reinforcement and to endorse its operations directed against a neighbouring country, is totally incompatible with the last two provisions of that resolution.

For that matter, Lebanon refuses to negotiate with Israel on implementing resolution 425 (1978), despite Israel's continuing invitations to do so. Instead of working to fulfil international agreements, Lebanon chooses to stand behind the group that openly spurns them, as in the following statement, "Only resistance will ensure the return of our land, not resolution 425 (1978) nor the Security Council or the international community" (statement by Hizbollah's Sheikh Nasrallah, The Jerusalem Post, 5 January 1999).

This leaves Israel with no choice but to exercise its right to self-defence in accordance with international law. Nevertheless, Israel once again calls on the Government of Lebanon to return to the negotiating table to implement resolution 425 (1978).

I should be grateful if you will have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 161 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dore GOLD
Ambassador
Permanent Representative